

009 Off-reserve conservation incentives

1. Snapshot table

Allocation		Procurement		Regional Priority	
2007	\$0	Type	Open Invitation	Coastal	10%
Indicative 2008	\$100,000	First Call Date	April 2008	Top End	30%
Indicative 2009	\$150,000	Indicative Contract Start	July	Savannas	30%
The allocation of funds is only guaranteed for 2007. More info: NHT Transition Advice.		Preferred duration	2 year	Arid Centre	30%
				Territory	0%

2. Program description

This is an on-ground Investment Program.

Purpose

This Program is a proposed continuation of a scoping study and trials funded through the RIS04-07 (2005/116). That study explores interstate and international incentive programs, evaluates their suitability for use in the NT across a range of tenures and economies, and then establishes trials for recommended incentives.

This Investment Program will:

- Implement a suite of conservation incentive programs for different tenures and economies as recommended by the scoping study (2005/116).
- Provide longer term support for the continuation, refinement (if necessary), and supplementation of trials initiated by the scoping study.
- Negotiate with landholders regarding appropriate conservation targets and outcomes for country on which the incentives programs are applied.
- Provide support for the application of incentives programs in areas where there are threatened and culturally significant species and communities, sites of national and international significance, and other areas where conservation outcomes are sought.
- Evaluate uptake rates and natural resource management outcomes for trialled incentives.
- Make recommendations regarding the longer term application of incentives programs in the NT and the resources which may be required to implement such programs.

Links with RIS04-07 and RIS07-10 Investment Programs

This Investment Program is a continuation of RIS04-07 project 2005/116 'Conservation incentives program of the Northern Territory'. Three other related projects were funded through RIS04-07. Further information regarding these projects can be found in Section 5 of this Program and Appendix 2.

Special attention should be given to integration of projects under this Program with related Investment Programs '004 Fire: research and strategic development', '005 Fire: regional planning', '006 Fire: regional management', '007 Invasive species: plans and surveys', '008 Invasive species: control and eradication' and '011 Threatened species recovery'.

Location

This is a Territory-wide Investment Program.

Procurement

This Program is entirely funded through open invitation. Funding will be called in April 2008 with funding to commence in July 2008.

3. Targets, actions outcomes - linking to the INRM Plan

The NT Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (2005) specifies the Management Action Targets (MATs) and Management Actions (MAs) the Board is allowed to invest in. This Program is designed to make progress towards the following Management Action Targets. As explained in section 4.2 of this Strategy, the Management Actions defined in the INRM Plan have in some cases been split into a number of simplified sub-Actions (for example, MA3-11.02 is a sub-Action of MA3-.11). These are also outlined below.

MAT	Description
MAT3-04	By 2008, mechanisms (eg. incentives and other support programs) will be in place and capacity building programs implemented across all land tenures to improve stewardship and promote off-reserve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
MAT3-06	By 2010, at least 10% of each vegetation type (identified at the 1:1,000,000 scale) will be included within lands managed with the primary goal of biodiversity conservation, and the condition of these vegetation types maintained at 2005 levels.
MAT7-07	By 2010, an incentives program is developed to deliver greater landholder and industry group involvement in and uptake of best practice land and sea management.

MAs	Description
MA3-11.02	Implement the programs and mechanisms identified in MA3-9 and MA3-10 above focusing initial attention on management of threatened and culturally significant species and communities, and sites of national and international significance.
MA3-19.02	In consultation with landholders implement opportunities for off-reserve conservation to achieve negotiated conservation targets and outcomes.
MA7-37.02	Evaluate trials of incentive mechanisms for their NRM outcomes and uptake rates.

Management Actions work towards outcomes. The table below reiterates the MAs and sub-Actions associated with this Investment Program but places the focus on expected outcomes. The right hand '[%]' column shows the expected emphasis on each outcome. For example, 45% of the effort in this Program should relate to implementing opportunities for off-reserve conservation.

MAs	Outcome	[%]
MA3-11.02	Implement the programs and mechanisms identified in MA3-9 and MA3-10 with initial attention on management of threatened and culturally significant species and communities, and sites of national and international significance.	45
MA3-19.02	Opportunities for off-reserve conservation are implemented in consultation with landholders.	45
MA7-37.02	NRM outcomes and uptake rates of trialled incentive mechanisms have been evaluated.	10

4. Program rationale

Background

National parks and other conservation reserves are widely recognised as the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation. The Northern Territory's national park system includes some outstanding areas of international and national significance. However, the percentage of land area formally devoted to conservation and national parks in the Territory is the least of any Australian jurisdiction. It also falls well below generally agreed national and international recommendations, which typically set a benchmark of at least 10-15% of lands devoted to conservation.

The relatively small proportion of lands devoted to formal conservation reserves means that biodiversity conservation in the Northern Territory is unusually reliant on the good management of lands outside the protected area system. The NRMB(NT) and stakeholders consulted in the development of this strategy recognise that off-reserve conservation is an important tool for protecting and maintaining the NT's biodiversity.

Mechanisms for implementing off-reserve include market based instruments, stewardship payments, conservation covenants, private protected areas, and schemes such as Land for Wildlife. These mechanisms will be applicable to all land types including Indigenous Protected Areas and private conservation areas.

Management issues

More than half the 112 mapped vegetation types in the NT are either not reserved or inadequately represented in our formal reserve system. The situation is likely to be worse for more finely discriminated vegetation types that are used for assessing reservation performance in other jurisdictions. Currently 3.7% of the NT is reserved, the bulk of this being hilly or escarpment country, with very little reservation of grassland areas. Without greater security, through protection in reservations and better management of threatening processes in both reserved and unreserved lands (for example, through negotiated off-reserve conservation agreements), it appears likely that biodiversity values will continue to decline.

5. Current related investment from RIS04-07

A number of related projects were funded through RIS04-07. The following chart shows the continuity between those projects and this Investment Program. Further details regarding these projects can be found in Appendix 1.

